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Title: I, Payroll/Personnel Manual

Chapter:

Bulletin: Title I, 04-15, Processing of Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program Documents and Release of Entry, Processing, Inquiry, and Correction System (EPIC) Version 2.07A

Date: November 2, 2004

To: Holders of the Payroll/Personnel Manual
Personnel Users Groups
Personnel Offices

This bulletin provides information about changes related to the processing of Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program documents which are being implemented effective Pay Period 22, 2004 (November 8, 2004). The data provided is categorized in the following sections:

- Changes To Form SF-2809, Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program Election Form
- FEHB Open Season
- Entry/Processing
- Procedures
- Inquiries

Changes To Form SF-2809, Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program Election Form

Standard Form SF-2809, Federal Employees Health Benefits Program Election Form, has been revised to include changes to the following Sections:

- **Who May Use SF-2809.** New data has been included on the form for employees who participate in the premium conversion option. (Premium conversion allows employees who are eligible for FEHB the opportunity to pay for their share of FEHB premiums with pre-tax dollars. **Note:** All employees who enroll in FEHB automatically receive premium coverage tax benefits, unless they waive participation.)
- **Instructions for Completing SF-2809.** Completion instructions on the form have been revised to include only those items that are not explained on the form.
- **Part A - Enrollee and Family Member Information.** Completion instructions on the form have been revised to include data for family members who are eligible for coverage.

- **Part B - Present Plan.** Completion instructions on the form have been revised for changing, canceling, or suspending enrollments.
- **Part C - New Plan.** Completion instructions on the form have been revised for enrolling or changing enrollment. **Note:** Enrollment codes identify the relationship between the employee and the eligible family members.
- **Part D - Event Code.** Event codes have been revised. The Explanation of Table of Permissible Changes in Enrollment is organized by enrollee categories as follows:
 1. Employees who participate in premium conversion
 2. Annuitants (other than Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) annuitants), including individuals receiving monthly compensation from the Office of Worker's Compensation Programs
 3. Former spouses eligible for coverage under the Spouse Equity provisions of FEHB law
 4. Individuals eligible for coverage under the temporary continuation of coverage (TCC) provisions of the FEHB law
 5. Employees who waived participation in premium conversion

Each enrollee category is designated by a number, which identifies the enrollee group. Following each number is a letter, which identifies a specific permissible event. For example, the event code *IA* refers to the initial opportunity to enroll for an employee who elects to participate in premium conversion. Each enrollee category also includes data relating to premium conversion elections.
- **Part E - Election Not to Enroll.** Completion instructions on the form have been revised for employees who waive enrollment in the FEHB Program.
- **Part F - Cancellation.** Completion instructions on the form have been revised for canceling FEHB enrollment. This section also includes data related to:
 - Cancellation of enrollment
 - Employees who elect not to enroll or who cancel their enrollment
 - Annuitants who cancel their enrollment
 - Former spouses (Spouse Equity) who cancel their enrollment
 - TCC enrollees who cancel their enrollment
- **Part G - Suspension.** Completion instructions on the form have been revised for annuitants or former spouses who wish to suspend FEHB enrollment and enroll in one of the following programs:
 - Medicare Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) or Medicare Advantage plan
 - Medicaid similar state-sponsored program of medical assistance for the needy

- TRICARE (including Uniformed Services Family Health Plan or TRICARE for Life)
- CHAMPVA (Civilian Health and Medical Program of Veterans Affairs)
- **Part H - Signature.** Completion instructions on the form have been revised to include data to register for someone else when:
 - You have been given written authorization to act on the individual's behalf.
 - A former spouse is eligible for coverage under the Spouse Equity provisions.
 - You act as a court-appointed guardian for an individual who is eligible for TCC.
- **Part I - Agency or Retirement System Information and Remarks.** These sections should be left blank as they are for agency or retirement system use only.

For a copy of the revised Form SF-2809, FEHB Guide, or other health benefits data, refer to the FEHB website at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/health>.

FEHB Open Season

The open season enrollment period for the FEHB Program is November 8 through December 13, 2004. New enrollments and changes for the open season will become effective January 9, 2005.

Information for Processing Form SF-2809, Health Benefits Registration Form.

Before SF-2809's can be processed, the National Finance Center (NFC) must receive the Year 2005 FEHB enrollment codes and rates from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and update Table 012, Health Benefits Rates, in the Table Management System (TMGT). If the codes and rates are not received prior to November 8, 2004, documents entered and released will fail the Personnel Edit Subsystem (PINE) edits and remain in suspense until the new codes and rates are entered. Users should periodically review Table 012 for updated FEHB enrollment codes and rates. SF-2809's should be entered during the pay period in which the personnel office receives the completed forms, if Table 012 is updated. Enrollment forms must not be held for processing until after the close of open season.

Once the rates have been updated in TMGT, FEHB documents entered during open season that have passed the PINE edits are held in the future file until processing for the effective pay period. After the documents have successfully processed through the Payroll/Personnel System (PPS), the carrier copies of the SF-2809's are generated and transmitted to the FEHB carriers in the pay period in which they are processed. Transmitting the carrier copies at this time makes it possible for carriers to issue new identification cards immediately. **Note:** Do not send any copies of the SF-2809 to NFC. Distribute the copies of the SF-2809's in accordance with agency instructions.

Modifying or Canceling an SF-2809. If an SF-2809 processed in EPIC during open season must be modified or canceled, the personnel office should activate the future dated documents, make corrections, and save the documents. If the SF-2809 was processed in EPIC, utilize EPIC to take the appropriate action. Follow this procedure through the end of the processing cycle to Pay Period 26.

Processing Retirement Cases. If an employee plans to retire on or before January 8, 2005, and requests an open season change, do not enter the SF-2809 in the PPS. Include the SF-2809 with the employee's retirement package. The employee should complete the SF-2809 and the authorized agency official should only initial and date Part H to show timely submission. (The name of the agency and the signature of its authorized agency official should not appear on the SF-2809.) OPM will use this SF-2809 to complete processing of the employee's retirement request. Also include a memorandum with the FEHB documentation verifying the employee's eligibility to carry health benefit insurance into retirement. Form SF-2810, Change in Health Benefits Enrollment Form, is no longer a required form for the retirement package.

Notification to DPRS Enrollees. This bulletin does not apply to enrollments or changes for enrollees in the Direct Premium Remittance System (DPRS). Information will be issued in a separate bulletin to DPRS enrollees.

Entry/Processing

Processing Enrollee Family Data. This bulletin announces changes in how enrollee family data is entered for eligible family members when FEHB documents are processed. This change is in compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) standards for enrollment and disenrollment in a health plan.

Enrollee Family Names. Currently, when the name of a family member is entered in the Name of Family Members field during the processing of an FEHB document, the last name is separated from the First Name by a space only. (i.e., Dudley John.) The Middle Initial is not entered. Additionally, if the family member's last name contains a suffix (Jr., Sr., III, etc.), the Last Name is followed by a comma (","), the suffix, a space, and then the First Name. (i.e., Dudley,Sr John.)

Effective with the processing of documents for Pay Period 22, 2004, the format for entering the name of a family member in the Name of Family Members field for an FEHB document will change. The enrollee's last name, first name, middle initial will each be entered in a separate section of the field and displayed as:

- Name Last
- Name First
- Name Middle Initial

Enrollee Family Address. The following fields have been added to include a family member's address when their address is different from the enrollee's.

- Address Line 1
- Address Line 2
- Address Line 3
- Address City Name
- Address State Name

Other Health Benefits. The following fields have been added to include other types of health benefits insurance data the enrollee and/or family member may carry.

- Other Insurance Name
- Other Private Insurance Indicator
- Other Insurance Policy Number
- TRICARE
- Medicare Part A Indicator
- Medicare Part B Indicator
- Medicare Part D Indicator
- CHAMPUS (Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services) Indicator

EPIC. EPIC Version 2.07A is now available from the Download Center on NFC's home page. The software was effective with the exception of SF-2809 actions, for the beginning of processing of Pay Period 20, 2004 (October 12, 2004) and will be mandatory for the beginning of processing Pay Period 22 (November 08, 2004). **Note:** Agencies that downloaded EPIC Version 2.07 since October 12, 2004 will be required to install EPIC Version 2.07A.

Users must ensure that all SF-2809 actions (Documents Types 180/181) processed using EPIC Version 2.06, have applied to the PPS by Friday, November 5, 2004. Any SF-2809 actions that are in New, Pending, Suspense, or Future status that have not applied to the PPS by November 5, 2004, will need to be re-entered using the new EPIC Version 2.07A.

EPIC Version 2.06 will remain available for processing all document types except SF-2809 actions (Documents Types 180/181) until Monday, November 22, 2004.

Users with access to EPIC sensitive and non-sensitive payroll documents will automatically have access to the new document type. If security access is needed, users should follow agency procedures for requesting security access.

Front-End System Interface (FESI). Effective Pay Period 22, 2004 (November 8, 2004), FESI will collect FEHB enrollee and family member data represented on the SF-2809. FESI record layouts have been updated to allow enrollee and family member data to be accepted within the 800-character file size used by all FESI users.

FESI-180 Document-Record-1 is used to process enrollee data. Depending on the number of family members, a maximum of nine 800-character records are now available for FESI users to send family member data. These records would be identified as FESI-180 Document-Record-2 through -10.

To assure that multiple records are processed correctly, two new fields have been added to FESI-180 Document-Rec-1. The FESI-FEHB-Rec Num field (columns (cols) 39-40) must contain a value of 01 through 09. FESI users must select the appropriate number to identify how many records it will take to send the enrollee and/or dependent data. The FESI-Num-Of-Dependents field (cols 41-42) on the record layout must contain a valid value between 0 & 16. The value in this field should be the same on each record you send. See the tables below for examples.

Example 1. An Enrollee With No Dependents			
Control Data (Cols 1-38)	FESI-FEHB-Rec Num (Cols 39-40)	FESI-Num-Of- Dependents (Cols 41-42)	FEHB Data (Cols 43-800)
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	01	00	Enrollee Data

Example 2. An Enrollee With 16 Dependents			
Control Data (Cols 1-38)	FESI-FEHB-Rec Num (Cols 39-40)	FESI-Num- Of-Dependents (Cols 41-42)	FEHB Data (Cols 43-800)
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	01	16	Enrollee Data
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	02	16	Dependent 1 & 2 Data
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	03	16	Dependent 3 & 4 Data
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	04	16	Dependent 5 & 6 Data
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	05	16	Dependent 7 & 8 Data
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	06	16	Dependent 9 & 10 Data
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	07	16	Dependent 11 & 12 Data
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	08	16	Dependent 13 & 14 Data
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx	09	16	Dependent 15 & 16 Data

All SF-2809 documents (Documents Types 180/181) that were processed using the current version of FESI must be applied to the PPS by November 5, 2004. Any pending

documents held in FESI suspense or the Future File that have not applied to the Payroll/Personnel System (PPS) by November 5, 2004, will need to be re-entered using the updated version of FESI record layouts.

Employee Personal Page (EPP)/Employee Self Service (ESS). EPP/ESS has been updated to include personal data and data related to other types of health benefits insurance that an enrollee and/or family members may have. To capture FEHB enrollee data, the following fields have been added to the Enter FEHB Change Request Window, Change to New Plan:

- Pre-Tax Premiums
- TRICARE
- Medicare D
- Other Insurance Policy Number

To capture FEHB enrollment data for family members, the following fields have been added to the Enter FEHB Change Request Window, Change to New Plan:

- Name (Last, First, Middle Initial)
- Address (if different from enrollee)
- City State Zip
- Medicare A
- Medicare B
- Medicare D
- TRICARE
- Other Insurance
- Other Insurance Plan Name
- Other Insurance Policy Number

The addition of the above mentioned fields have realigned the record layout of the screens, and will be available on November 8, 2004.

Procedures

The EPIC and FESI procedures, which are available online at NFC's Web site, are being updated to include the data in this bulletin. To view and/or print these procedures, go to the Web site (www.nfc.usda.gov) and click the **Pubs & Forms** icon. At the Pubs & Forms page left-hand menu, click **List By Title/Chapter** or **List Acronym/Name**, and search for the

appropriate chapter on the list provided. If you are unable to print from the Web, you can request a printed copy by submitting Form AD-1083, Request for Action for Procedures/Reports, to the address or fax number printed on the form.

Inquiries

For more information on the FEHB Program, see OPM's Web site at www.opm.gov/insure/health.

For questions about policy/regulations, contact your agency/bureau representative or Committee for Agriculture Payroll/Personnel System (CAPPS) representative. Please refer questions about system access to Customer Support at **504-255-5230** or via e-mail to customer.support@usda.gov. Refer questions about FEHB processing to the Payroll Operations Branch at **504-255-4630** .



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